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# THE ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL

BY WILLIAM BOYCE THOMPSON

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THEODORE ROOSEVELT was so great a man, so wide in his range of sympathies, so all-embracing in his activities, that discussion of a memorial to him soon developed among his friends and followers the fact that it would be extremely difficult to select a means of transmitting to future generations the message of his life, the inspiration that his ideals had been to his contemporaries. Suggestions by the score, all of merit, came from his devoted followers, but since they came from individuals or groups having special interest in certain phases of his career, most of them were scarcely calculated to commemorate broadly the influence of this remarkable man.

It was the desire of the Roosevelt Memorial Association to erect to him a memorial as characteristic, as distinctive, as individual as was his personality—one which would be not merely a monument to a great man but a monument to Theodore Roosevelt, expressing for all time the flaming spirit which was his, giving to all future Americans the stimulus to right living and profound patriotism which emanated from him. For that reason the committee decided on two memorials, or, rather, a two-fold memorial: a national memorial at Washington, the seat of the Government and the scene of his labors for many years; and a park at Oyster Bay. To this end the Roosevelt Memorial Association has decided upon an immediate plan of work as follows:

*First*, a nation-wide ceremony that will enable the people of America to give voice to their reverence for the great American we have lost, and to their belief in and loyalty to the doctrines of patriotism for which he stood throughout his life.

*Second*, the development or building of permanent memorials that will perpetuate his memory and interpret to future generations his indomitable Americanism.

For the first, there will be held in every city of the United States, on Theodore Roosevelt's birthday, October 27th, a meeting to which the public will be invited, and at which prominent speakers will tell the story of his career.

For the second, the week of October 20-27th will be devoted to the receipt of gifts of money from the American people, to be used for the permanent memorials to Theodore Roosevelt. Every contributor, no matter what his gift, will be enrolled as a member of the Roosevelt Memorial Association.

The features of this programme may be considered aesthetic and inspirational. The memorial at Washington will be—must be, in order to be worthy of him and of its purpose—a great and lasting work of art. Time changes practical conditions, even the life of the people. But Art endures. A great work of art stands for all time, carrying into the life of those who view it the serenity, the beauty, the uplifting of spirit and the ennobling of nature which is the mission of true Art. To my notion it is only by means of such a work of art that the spirit, the ideals of so great and many-sided a man as Theodore Roosevelt can adequately be sent down the ages, conveying to future generations of Americans, according to their ability to receive it, a message of the great character and noble, unselfish qualities for which he was loved by his contemporaries.

It is fitting that such a memorial be erected in Washington. To the capital of their country all good Americans, at some time or other in their lives, endeavor to travel. That city alone belongs to all the people. There, above all other places, should be the monument to the Roosevelt who was servant of all the people, their guide and leader.

The park at Oyster Bay will serve to commemorate another phase of his nature. During his lifetime he labored to obtain such a park as a local improvement, but various difficulties prevented the accomplishment of his project. Now it takes on a far larger aspect. The creation of a park, with all that a park means in the way of rest, recreation and upbuilding of mind and body for humankind, and the fostering of the feathered friends in which Theodore

Roosevelt was so keenly interested, is a plan which would have met his approval at any time. A park at Oyster Bay, so near to the spot where he lies buried, will become a place of pilgrimage as Mount Vernon and President Lincoln's home have become.

I believe such memorials, infused with his spirit of public service, are bound to be a powerful influence on the life of this country for years ahead, and so, on the future of the world. He himself said, "Our nation is that one among all the nations of the earth which holds in its hands the fate of the coming years." And he also said, "We shall never be successful over the dangers that confront us; we shall never achieve true greatness, nor reach the lofty ideal which the founders and preservers of our mighty Federal Republic have set before us, unless we are Americans in heart and soul, in spirit and purpose, keenly alive to the responsibility implied in the very name of American, and proud beyond measure of the glorious privilege of bearing it."

Roosevelt was the spirit of America incarnate. His acts and sayings constituted a code which, if lived up to and applied, would make this land a glorious place even for its humblest citizens. It is the hope of those of us in the Roosevelt Memorial Association to keep the Roosevelt torch burning, perpetuating in the boys and young men of America his influence for righteousness.

This will be as Theodore Roosevelt would have wanted it. No better tribute could be paid to any great leader by his devoted followers than the carrying on of the work in which he labored; and no great leader better deserves such a tribute than he, both because of his own splendid qualities and the high and noble character of the service to which he devoted himself unselfishly and unswervingly. We of this generation who were privileged to be associated with him knew and loved the man and revered the great public servant. The inspiration of his life cannot die. It is the purpose of the memorials which have been planned to transmit that inspiration to future generations as fully as lies within the powers of great Art and a man-built organization to do so.

WILLIAM BOYCE THOMPSON.